

Editor's Notebook

The CHIPS and Department of the Navy Information Technology Umbrella Program staffs offer our deepest sympathy over the loss of life and property in the areas ravaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Our hearts and prayers are with you and our stricken shipmates and their families.

In response to the devastation, the military services are at the forefront of relief and recovery missions led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in conjunction with the Department of Defense (DoD).

An active duty force joined the National Guard in search and rescue operations, aeromedical evacuation of critically-ill patients, medical assistance, building and repairing structures, debris-clearing, marine-salvage, damage assessment and more. There was rapid response from the USS Iwo Jima, USS Shreveport, USS Tortuga, USS Graple, USS Patuxent, USNS Comfort, Coast Guard cutters, and military aircraft and helicopters.

FEMA reported that DoD has delivered more than 24.7 million liters of water, 67 million pounds of ice and 13.6 million individually packaged rations to areas in Mississippi and Louisiana.

As of Sept. 21, 2005, DoD reported 54,426 military personnel on the ground or aboard ships supporting relief operations — 13,305 active duty and 39,037 National Guard. The recovery effort is ongoing.

Our theme for this issue is "FORCEnet Engineering," and we are proud to feature a special section on the FORCEnet chief engineer — SPAWAR. We are kicking off the section with an interview with Rear Adm. Ken Slaght, who has led SPAWAR through decisive transformational change for the last five years.

Welcome new subscribers!

Sharon Anderson

Civilian Personnel Leave Transfer Program

The Office of Personnel Management has established an emergency leave transfer program to assist civilian employees affected by Hurricane Katrina. Authorized by President Bush, the leave transfer program will permit employees to donate unused annual leave for transfer to employees who are adversely affected by Hurricane Katrina.

OPM's regulations on the administration of the emergency leave transfer program are available on its Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/HTML/emerg.asp/>.

OPM has set up a number for federal employees and retirees affected by the storm, 1-800-307-8298. Open 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. Central Time.

Most affected employees will be granted excused absence or receive other payments to cope with the immediate emergency. The emergency leave transfer program will be in place to assist approved leave recipients as the need for donated leave becomes known.



New Orleans (Sept. 24, 2005) – U.S. Navy Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 1st Class William Davis, assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light Four Eight (HSL-48), checks on a lowered search and rescue swimmer during a search and rescue mission over New Orleans. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Steven Williams.



New Orleans (Sept. 24, 2005) - U.S. Navy Builder 1st Class Daniel McKee, right, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four Zero (NMCB-40), hands-off a sandbag to another Seabee while repairing a levee. A 150-foot sandbag wall was completed in time to beat the high tide, protecting Plaquemine Parish residents from any further damage caused by flooding as a result of Hurricane Rita. U.S. Navy photo.

Biloxi, Miss. (Sept. 12, 2005) - U.S. Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion One (NMCB-1), based out of Gulfport, Miss., organize bottled water to give to families at First Baptist Church Biloxi. The Red Cross is using the church as a distribution point for food, water and supplies to victims of Hurricane Katrina. U.S. Navy photo by Journalist Seaman Joanne De Vera.

